

Low Speed Vehicle Regulations

City of Cincinnati

Department of Transportation and Engineering

Pilot Program and Interim Regulations for Low Speed Vehicle Operations in Cincinnati

Background:

As of January 1, 2017, the Ohio Revised Code authorizes a “low-speed vehicle” (defined as having a maximum speed of 20-25 miles per hour) (“LSV”) to operate on any street having an established speed limit of not more than thirty-five miles per hour subject to local regulations. Several businesses have approached the Department of Transportation and Engineering (“DOTE”) to inquire as to City regulations concerning LSV operations on City streets for commercial purposes.

DOTE recognizes that the State of Ohio authorization of the use of LSVs on Ohio roadways applies to both private and commercial use. DOTE also recognizes that the State of Ohio has not adopted any additional safety standards for LSVs beyond the federal safety standards that apply to LSVs. The State of Ohio does not prohibit local authorities from adopting ordinances, resolutions, or regulations governing the operation of a low-speed vehicle.

DOTE has reviewed applicable federal regulations and recognizes that LSVs are exempt from most federal safety standards that apply to motor vehicles, and that LSVs are not required to meet any criteria for vehicle crashworthiness.

DOTE has reviewed the State of Ohio requirements for the operation of LSVs on public roadways and recognizes and accepts that LSVs must be properly registered in the State of Ohio prior to either private or commercial use on public roadways in Ohio. (Refer to the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Vehicle Registration, Unconventional Vehicles.)

DOTE has reviewed applicable City regulations and determined that a commercial LSV used to provide individual transportation service for compensation is a “public vehicle” within the meaning of Chapter 407, “Public Vehicles,” of the Municipal Code. Accordingly, LSVs are subject to licensing requirements under Chapter 407.

Pilot Program:

In light of the State law permitting the operation of LSVs, the City is launching a three-year pilot program covering both commercial and private use of LSVs. The goal of the pilot program is to promote the safety of the traveling public while accommodating the specific concerns raised by both private and commercial use of LSVs on City streets. The pilot program may be modified or terminated at the discretion of the City Manager or his designee.

As part of the pilot program, the Director of DOTE hereby adopts the following interim regulations concerning the application of Chapter 407 to LSV commercial operations and to the general private operation of LSVs on City streets.

Regulations:

1. Only LSVs that meet the federal motor vehicle standards for the low-speed vehicle class and have the compliance label affixed are authorized to operate on public streets within the City. (The vehicle complies with the definition and standards for low speed vehicles set forth in the Federal Motor Vehicle Standard No. 500 (49 CFR 571.3(b) and 49 CFR 571.500, respectively).
2. LSV operation is permitted on streets only and prohibited on any multiuse path or sidewalk.
3. LSVs shall be operated in compliance with applicable traffic code provisions.
4. Drivers are required to have a full Ohio Class D (Passenger) driver's license or higher.
5. Current State and Federal motor vehicle laws apply to the driver and vehicle owner. Traffic citations may be issued as with regular vehicular violations with the same penalties imposed.
6. LSVs must have the following features, in addition to those required by applicable State and Federal law:
 - a. Speedometer
 - b. Windshield defrosting & defogging system
 - c. Occupant compartment doors
 - d. Driver and occupant seat belts
 - e. Slow moving vehicle sign must be attached to the rear of the vehicle.
7. The LSV must have a proper, approved Title and Registration.
8. No operation of an LSV is allowed in Cincinnati upon any street having an established speed limit greater than 25 miles per hour. In addition, LSV operations are prohibited on the following streets except as necessary to cross the street at an intersection:
 - a. Second Street from the Clay Wade Bailey Bridge to E. Pete Rose Way
 - b. Third Street from the Clay Wade Bailey Bridge to Broadway
 - c. Westbound Twelfth Street, from Main Street to Elm Street
9. LSV operation is prohibited on 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 9th Street from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., except as necessary to cross the street at an intersection. (These are interstate feeders during these time periods.)
10. Commercial operation of a low-speed vehicle ("LSV") in provision of transportation services available to the public on the public streets requires a public vehicle licensed in accordance with Chapter 407 of the Cincinnati Municipal Code.
11. A commercial LSV must operate in the designated zones and is required to possess a tour vehicle license. The Operations Zone Map is attached and integral to these regulations.

12. The following safety regulations apply to commercial LSV operations:
 - a. Loading and unloading passengers is permitted exclusively when the vehicle is stopped at curbside locations; loading/unloading while double parked is prohibited.
 - b. Loading and unloading passengers is permitted from the curbside of the vehicle only.
 - c. LSVs are prohibited from stopping, loading, or unloading passengers within the streetcar obstruction zone as defined in Section 501-1-S8 of the Cincinnati Municipal Code.
 - d. LSVs are prohibited from stopping, loading, or unloading passengers within intersections or crosswalks.
13. No person shall have in the person's possession an opened container of beer or intoxicating liquor while in an LSV that is within the public right-of-way.
14. Low speed vehicles may drive at a maximum speed of between 20 mph and 25 mph and may not be modified to drive faster.
15. LSV owners and operators must have insurance that provides coverage for liability in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000 per occupant per occurrence for bodily injury and \$1,000,000 per occurrence for property damage. The policy shall name the City of Cincinnati as an additional insured.
16. Low speed vehicles are subject to Ohio's mandatory seat belt requirements.
17. A LSV may only carry the number of passengers for which it is designed, including the driver.
18. The vehicle must not be driven while carrying a child passenger younger than ten years old.
19. No sidecars, trailers, or non-motorized equipment are permitted for use on a low speed vehicle.



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